(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether Governments propose to reconsider this decision and permit them to appear in these examinations as before?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The personnel below officers rank (PBOR) of Armed Forces are permitted to appear in Civil Services Examinations etc. However, the PBOR in the Air Force are permitted to apply for Civil Services Examinations after completion of 7 years of service including training period.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Acquisition of Fighter Aircrafts for IAF

802. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had taken a decision to acquire 126 new fighter aircrafts for Indian Air Force;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that Government had taken a decision not to phase out the MIG's; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government constantly review the security environment and accordingly decide to induct appropriate equipment and to make other arrangements for adequate defence preparedness.

(b) It would not be in the interest of national security to give details.

(c) and (d) As various aircraft complete their technical life or otherwise lose their utility, they are phased out and new aircraft inducted. Where possible, selective upgrades of the aircraft are carried out.

Purchase of Ship Chandlers for Indian Navy

803. SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ship chandler purchases in the Indian Navy was made from middlemen instead of from the original equipment manufacturer at Visakhapatnam's Eastern Naval Command;